

HLTA FORUM  
Brief Notes from the meeting  
Tuesday February 2012  
Venue: Park Walk Primary School

This was the twelfth meeting of the HLTA Forum in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. I would like to thank the HLTA's, Headteachers and schools for supporting this initiative.

The aims of the HLTA Forum are:

- To provide professional development opportunities for HLTA(s)
- To facilitate information sharing
- To support the dissemination of learning across the authority

HLTAs and their Headteachers are encouraged to forward any items they wish to be included at a future Forum

Yours, Maddy Luxon (AST for Support Staff; [Madeleine.Luxon@avondale.rbkc.sch.uk](mailto:Madeleine.Luxon@avondale.rbkc.sch.uk) )

**HLTAs present:**

Krystyna Miller (Oratory)  
Aadila Bronkhorst (Park Walk)  
Lorrie Knight (Oxford Gardens)  
Josephine Wilson (Servite)  
Lynn Greenland (Marlborough)

**Apologies** from Lynn Thomas (St Mary Abbots)

**1. Welcome and check notes from the last Forum**

- HLTAs have been promoting and as far as possible pointing colleagues to the link on the CPD pages  
<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools/supportstafftraining.aspx>

**2. Local Authority update: Three Borough working; Revised Green Binder; and Update on RBKC HLTA strategy**

- Three Boroughs will share education services from November 2011 (RBKC, Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster). The exact details have yet to be announced.
- Green Binder for Support Staff – updated guidance and resources can be found on the RBKC website:  
<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools/greenbinder.aspx>
- HLTA funding has ceased but advice and information is available for people who can finance them. The Information is available on the RBKC website under FAQ
- <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools/supportstaffcpd/trainingandqualifications.aspx>

**3. 'Developing Questioning Skills' (part 2) input led by Jake Mansell**

- Jake led an inspirational session on developing questioning skills following on from his input at our last HLTA forum. The interactive session included a recap

and review of techniques introduced last session and an introduction to various questioning tools for developing thinking.

- **Blooms Taxonomy** was introduced and demonstrated through the use of **Thinker's Keys** first developed by Tony Ryan. These are a set of twenty different activities designed to engage and motivate learners in a range of thinking tasks. A range of question or task starters are presented as keys to unlocking the analytical, critical and creative thinking abilities of learners.
- **Tarsia puzzles** were demonstrated as a tool to develop thinking. Google 'Formulator Tarsia Download' to get free software.
- **Concept Attainment Technique** was explored and the importance of 'self efficacy'. This discussion linked to a previous input on the findings of Carol Dweck who looked at 'fixed mindsets' and 'growth mindsets'
- To see full PowerPoint presentation please go to HLTA room/resources/powerpoint- Developing questioning skills on Fronter

#### 4. Tour of the school

- We decided not to have a tour of the school as the majority of the delegates had been fortunate enough to have already benefitted from a visit to Park walk.

#### 5. Latest research findings and key messages

- The following research paper was shared.

**Should teaching assistants have a pedagogical role?: lessons following the DISS project** - Rob Webster, Peter Blatchford and Anthony Russell - Department of Psychology and Human Development, Institute of Education, London, UK - Paper presented at BERA Annual Conference, 1st September 2010, University of Warwick, UK

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A paper presented at the University of Warwick\* at the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in September 2010 highlighted the concern that most Teaching Assistants are providing **alternative** rather than **additional** support to children with SEN and there has been a drift towards that TA becoming the primary educator for these pupils. The research data suggests that where this situation exists, the pupils do not make the progress expected of them. As the authors go on to explain: "We have been careful to stress that this situation is not the fault of TAs. Instead, it is attributable to decisions made – often with the best of intentions – about them, together with inadequate training for teachers on how to work with TAs, and a lack of opportunities for them to properly brief TAs before lessons."

Following this research, a group of professionals – school leaders, teachers, SENCos, trainers and local authority advisers – were brought together to examine the research and they made the following recommendations:

- Where classes are taught in ability groups, the teacher should spend at least as much time with lowest ability group as she does with other groups
- The main focus of the teachers' whole class teaching should be on pupils at Wave 2 (i.e. those identified as not making the expected level of progress)

- Reviews of pupil progress and TA deployment in relation to achieving progress, should be more frequent (e.g. termly) and used as a proxy measure of TA effectiveness
- Pupils should not be withdrawn from core lessons for TA-led interventions, as pupils must have the opportunity to apply their learning from these interventions in whole class contexts
- Teachers must take full responsibility for planning interventions and sharing and imparting their detailed plans to TAs. This responsibility should not be discharged to TAs
- TAs must be appropriately trained and prepared for leading intervention sessions.

The paper has led to 2 further pieces of work:

- The first piece of work is with schools, looking at creative solutions to TA development and deployment (particularly in the light of the cut in Government funding for TA training). These 'solutions' will be captured in a Handbook
- The second is a piece of research to provide a detailed description of the experiences of pupils with a Statement of SEN in mainstream schools. This will answer the question: "which adults provide what inputs/provisions, and in what proportions, to pupils with a Statement of SEN in mainstream schools?"
- This thought provoking research led to a lively debate about practice in our schools where delegates outlined the measures taken to ensure all interventions delivered by support staff are strategic, monitored and evaluated.
- 49% of the school workforce in Kensington and Chelsea comprise support staff. The Royal Borough promotes the professional development of this significant part of the school workforce as we believe that the most effective support staff are learners themselves. It is important to read this latest research with this in mind. We feel proud of our school support staff and although we endorse the research findings we are pleased to have in place advice and guidance and a highly inclusive approach to professional development to ensure support staff are given every opportunity to become highly reflective practitioners who are clear about role, are effectively deployed and have the skills to impact on pupil outcomes.

## **6. Impact of HLTA on pupil progress: Sharing good practice**

- A very useful discussion took place where everyone shared their school's approach to running interventions and how support staff are used to help children with SEN (see above).

## **7. The future for HLTA Forum**

- We believe the Professional Learning Clusters and the HLTA forums are a valuable CPD opportunity combining inspirational input from our consultants, quality presentations from peers and the opportunity to share good practice and network. We have been able to run the PLCs and HLTA Forums at no cost to schools through using different schools across the borough as venues and by using RBKC consultants.
- Unfortunately, the AST post for support staff has been terminated so Maddy Luxon (RBKC AST for Support Staff) will no longer be able to run this forum. However, following discussion within our group it was very clear that the HLTAs really valued the forum. Everyone was committed to keeping the HLTA Forum

going and felt the forum very effectively served its varying purposes. We discussed various ways the forum could potentially operate as a self sustaining group with support from Clare Sumpter who would liaise with appropriate LA officers. Aadila from Park Walk offered to host and co-ordinate (with support from Clare Sumpter) the next forum scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> May. Maddy agreed to liaise with Aadila and share templates for agenda and brief notes.

## 7. Further Information

- The CPD pages are a culmination of resources on CPD aimed at all school staff including professional frameworks and school to school sharing opportunities. Visit these pages at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools)
- **Communication** - If you have any queries please contact Clare Sumpter [clare.sumpter@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:clare.sumpter@rbkc.gov.uk)
- Following this meeting all HLTAs have been given access to our **HLTA Room on Fronter**. Please visit our HLTA room on Fronter to look at all the resources, give feedback and share ideas. Speak to your ICT co-ordinator or contact Belinda Evans ([belinda.evans@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:belinda.evans@rbkc.gov.uk)) if you have any problems getting into the HLTA Room
- **Support Staff Newsletter** Issue 7 of the Support Staff Newsletter came out in July. This newsletter is available online on the RBKC website: [www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools/supportstafftraining.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/educationandlearning/cpdforschools/supportstafftraining.aspx)

## 8. Forthcoming dates

- **Date of the Next HLTA Forum: Tuesday May 2012 at Park walk.**
- **It is very important that every HLTA makes maximum effort to attend this meeting as a key agenda item will be looking at ways forward to continue the HLTA forum.**

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH BOTH YOUR LINE MANAGER AND OTHER SUPPORT STAFF COLLEAGUES

Please check your RBKC school emails regularly as this will be the main method of communication.